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To Whom It May Concern:

Given all the recent publicity regarding jury duty and some proposed changes to the jury experience, I feel compelled to write and detail my experience with the present jury system.

It was not pleasant!!

I was called to jury duty in early January of 2006 for Wayne County Circuit Court. I showed up on time, signed in and was then told to sit down. After a small video presentation, then the wait began. No problems thus far. At 11:10 AM, my name was called along with approximately 30 other people. We were taken up stairs to Judge Daniel Ryan's court room. We went into court, sat down and then Judge Ryan entered. We were sworn in and then promptly dismissed and told he had another case and we had to return the next day. If he wasn't going to need this jury until the next day, why didn't he wait till the next day to pull the jury? Now I had to come down there twice! We were told to be there promptly at 8:30 AM the next day.

So, I arrived on time and sat outside his courtroom with the rest of the potential jurors. We were asked to line up, attendance was taken, and then we sat down again. We lined up 2 more times and then sat down again after each of these "line ups". We weren't taken into the court room until 11:30 AM!!!! Not one time did anyone come out and tell us what the delay was for. I felt we were being dis-respected and that nobody cared about us at all. Why were we asked to be there at 8:30 and not taken inside the court room for 3 hours without any explanation??

In addition, being a surgeon who treats primarily children, I had 8 operations scheduled for that second day. These were all children. When we were told we would have to return the next day, I spoke to the Baliff and told her my problem. These were children whose parents had taken the time off of work to be there for the surgery, had prepared their children for what was going to happen, and in some cases, had even taken the next week off to care for their child at home since they wouldn't be able to go to school. My explanation took 5 minutes. She whispered into the judge's ear for about 10 seconds so she obviously didn't explain the whole situation, and then I was told "too bad, be here tomorrow". I was never allowed to speak to the judge myself to explain my situation. Now I have to go home and at 1 in the afternoon, have my secretary call these 8 families and tell them their children's surgeries were being cancelled. Since I schedule surgery as far out as 6 weeks and I was fully booked, I had no time to get these children's surgeries done for 6 weeks and they had waited 6 weeks for that day. On top of all of that, since I had to be there at 8:30 and not called into the court room until 11:30, I could have performed probably 1/2 of those surgeries and still made it down there causing a lot less hardship to everyone involved. As it was, once my name was pulled and I went up into the jury box, the judge understood that I also had surgeries scheduled for the next day too and they dismissed me. Had he just let me speak to him the day before instead of hearing it from the baliff, I'm sure he would have dismissed me then and a lot of hardship could have been avoided.

I understand jury duty is our civic responsibility and I don't have any issue with that. What I object to is the way jurors are treated. How am I supposed to respect the jury process when no respect is given to the potential members of the jury?

I personally think they should have "professional" juries. There are many people, especially those that are retired, that have more time on their hands and that enjoy serving on a jury. If they pulled juries from a pool of people that actually want to be there, it would probably be a better system.

People that don't want to be there due to financial hardships with missing work or similar situations as mine above undoubtedly lead to apathetic juries that may actually in the long run affect the verdict.

Thank you